

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1670
AMEMBASSY BONN
USIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 3538

BONN FOR PRESS ATTACHE; USIA FOR IEU

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PINS, CZ
SUBJECT: MURRAY SEEGER, LOS ANGELES TIMES, VISA DENIAL

1. DR. MILAN KADNAR, HEAD OF MFA PRESS DEPARTMENT, TOLD PAO DEC. 16 THAT MURRAY SEEGER, BONN BASED LOS ANGELES TIMES CORRESPONDENT, WAS RECENTLY DENIED A VISA TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA FOR "ENGAGING IN ACTIVITIES THAT GO BEYOND THE NORMAL PRACTICE OF A JOURNALIST." PAO ASKED FOR AN EXPLANATION. KADNAR SAID, "EVERY DIPLOMAT KNOWS WHAT THAT MEANS." PAO POINTED OUT SEEGER IS A WELL-KNOWN, RESPONSIBLE CORRESPONDENT WITH MAJOR US PAPER, WHO HAD RECENTLY COMPLETED VISITS TO BUDAPEST AND SOFIA, AND THAT COVERAGE OF THE LOS ANGELES PHILHARMONIC'S VISIT TO PRAGUE AND BRATISLAVA WAS A LEGITIMATE JOURNALISTIC REQUEST. KADNAR SAID, "WE HAVE NO OBJECTION TO THE STORY OR THE PAPER, ONLY THE PERSON."

2. PAO REPLIED THAT GRANTING OF JOURNALISTS' VISAS ON US SIDE IS A MATTER OF RECIPROCITY AND THE GOC'S REFUSAL TO GRANT SEEGER A VISA COULD WELL BE RAISED IN THE PRESS AND IN CONGRESS. KADNAR REPLIED, "I UNDERSTAND YOUR POINT
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OF VIEW VERY WELL," BUT THAT, "MR. SEEGER WILL KNOW WHAT WE MEAN."

3. COMMENT: KADNAR'S MANNER WAS CLEAR, UNRUFFLED, AND PRECISE. HE GAVE NO CLUE AS TO WHAT THE GOC'S REAL OBJECTION TO SEEGER MIGHT BE. FROM THIS EMBASSY'S VIEWPOINT, SEEGER

IS AMONG THE SEASONED PROS COVERING EASTERN EUROPE, SOMEONE WHO KNOWS HOW TO SWIM AGAINST THE LOCAL CURRENT, AND WRITE STORIES OF INTEREST TO HIS READERS WITHOUT GIVING SUCH OFFENSE THAT HE WOULD BE DENIED REENTRY TO THE COUNTRY FROM WHICH HE IS WRITING.

4. FOR BONN: DO YOU KNOW, OR CAN SEEGER SUGGEST, ANY REASON WHY HE MIGHT HAVE BEEN TURNED DOWN FOR A CZECHOSLOVAK VISA?
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NNN

Message Attributes

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